

**LOWER MAIN STREET DESIGN STUDY**  
TRUMBULL, CT

OCTOBER, 2014

**BFI Planning**



# LOWER MAIN STREET DESIGN STUDY

PREPARED FOR  
TOWN OF TRUMBULL, CT  
SEPTEMBER 2014

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## 1. Executive Summary

In 2012-13, the Town of Trumbull updated its Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) and in early 2014 issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) seeking planning consultant services to conduct a design study and community outreach focused on Lower Main Street. Informed by its extensive community outreach during a POCD update in 2012/2013, and understanding that there may be imminent demand for redevelopment in these areas, the Planning & Zoning Commission wished to gain a detailed understanding of the community's desire for future growth in this area of Trumbull. The POCD identifies Lower Main Street as a Long Term Planned Development District on its Future Land Use Plan. Additionally, prior to the POCD update, the Town of Trumbull Zoning Regulations (2008) located a Professional Office Overlay District (POOZ) on the same stretch. However, for a variety of reasons examined below, this zoning initiative has not resulted in professional office development on Lower Main Street.

In June 2014, BFJ planning was commissioned by the Town to study the Lower Main Street area in this light and worked with the Planning and Zoning Commission to conduct community outreach to provide a detailed understanding of the community's vision of potential growth in the area. The design study process included several site visits to record existing conditions, data research and mapping analyses, and extensive community outreach. The consultant team, led by BFJ Planning, included Spinnaker Real Estate Partners as a real estate development expert to examine market opportunities and constraints for the Lower Main Street Study Area.

An underlining question throughout the study process became one of preservation versus redevelopment of Lower Main Street. On the one hand, many area residents advocated for the Town to adopt a preservation-oriented strategy, one that seeks to maintain the area's residential character in light of development pressures. Other residents, e.g. those living along Lower Main Street, advocated for regulatory changes that would allow them to sell or develop their properties more profitably. Setting the "right" level of development became an issue of strong interest as allowing too much development (professional office or otherwise) could potentially lead to the loss of the area's unique character and/or produce unintended consequences.

The following report examines these issues in detail, and ultimately recommends the Town to remove the POOZ from Lower Main Street and adopt regulations to allow for medium density residential redevelopment, limited to parcels along the east side of Lower Main Street. This would, in our professional opinion, accomplish many of the Town and community's objectives, as expressed throughout the study process, while providing property owners with an acceptable level of market opportunity. The study identifies a necessity for the Town to articulate specific design guidelines for the area to ensure that any new medium density residential uses contribute positively to the area's residential character, and recommends that single-family residential properties on the east side of Lower Main Street be maintained in their present configuration. Finally, the study recommends the Town to improve streetscape conditions, including installing new sidewalks, crosswalks and lighting along Lower Main Street, and suggests implementing such improvements either through development standards or through the acquisition of a grant or other funding so that they may be implemented ahead of any future development.

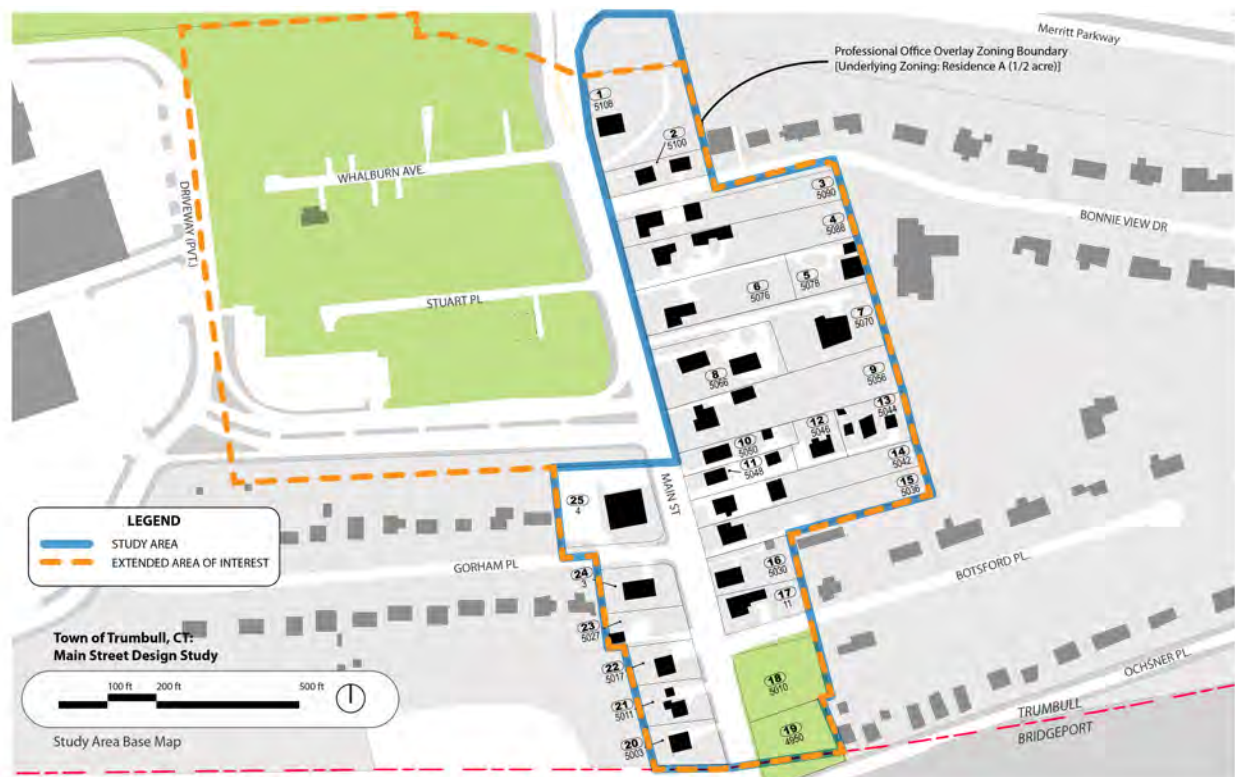


## 2. Study Area

The Lower Main Street Study Area is defined as properties on the east side of Lower Main Street from the Merritt Parkway, extending southerly to the Bridgeport municipal line and along west side of Lower Main Street from the eastern entrance access road to the Westfield Mall, south to the Bridgeport City line (see **Exhibit 1**). This coincides with the Town's Professional Office Overlay Zone (POOZ) that includes all properties that front (or have driveway access to) Lower Main Street south of the Merritt Parkway to the Bridgeport municipal line. This Study Area is approximately 13 acres in area and includes 25 properties ranging in size from 0.25 to 1.1 acres, with an average parcel size of 0.52 acres consistent the underlying Residence Zone A zoning.

For purposes of comprehensiveness, this study also considered an extended study area that included a large tract of land predominantly owned by the Westfield Mall on the west side of Lower Main Street north of the mall's eastern entrance. Early discussions involving Westfield representatives established that, while no development plan currently exists for the property, any future development would be oriented towards the mall's internal ring road, set back from Lower Main Street, and screened by existing trees and vegetation. Therefore the effective Study area for this design study reflects that established in the Town's RFQ (2014) as shown in **Exhibit 1**.

**Exhibit 1: Study Area Boundary - Lower Main Street Design Study, Trumbull CT (2014)**



*Exhibit 2: Study Area Aerial - Lower Main Street Design Study, Trumbull CT (2014)*





### 3. Existing Conditions

#### *Land Use*

As shown in **Exhibit 3**, land uses in the Study Area and surrounding context are predominantly residential. The Study Area contains one commercial property, the Redgate Hennessy funeral home, located on the northwest corner of Lower Main Street and Gorham Place, and two vacant properties on the east side of Lower Main Street, between Botsford and Ochsner Places. The areas adjacent to the Study Area, to the east and west, are also predominantly residential in character, but include the Westfield Mall to the west. The mall is set back approximately 850 feet from Lower Main Street and therefore has little visual presence on Lower Main Street. A Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is located on Bonnie View Drive, directly adjoining Study Area Properties to the east.

**Exhibit 3: Area Generalized Land Use – Lower Main Street Design Study, Trumbull CT (2014)**



#### *Housing Units and Tenure*

Residential properties in the Study Area include detached two- and three-story structures with an approximate setback of 50 to 60 feet from the street. Of the 22 residential properties in the Study Area, 18 are single-family homes, three (3) are two-family homes, and one (1) is a three-family structure (see **Exhibit 4**). All of the single-family occupied properties except one are owner-occupied, while the two- and three-family properties are renter occupied (see **Exhibit 5**). It is important to note that all the rental properties in the Study Area are located on the east side of Lower Main Street, and, according to municipal tax records, these properties are the only ones on the east side of Lower Main Street to have transferred ownership since 2005. While some of the homes in the Study Area are well maintained other appear to be in need of maintenance investment.

**Exhibit 4: Study Area Land Use by Unit Type – Lower Main Street Design Study, Trumbull CT (2014)**



**Exhibit 5: Study Area Land Use by Tenure – Lower Main Street Design Study, Trumbull CT (2014)**

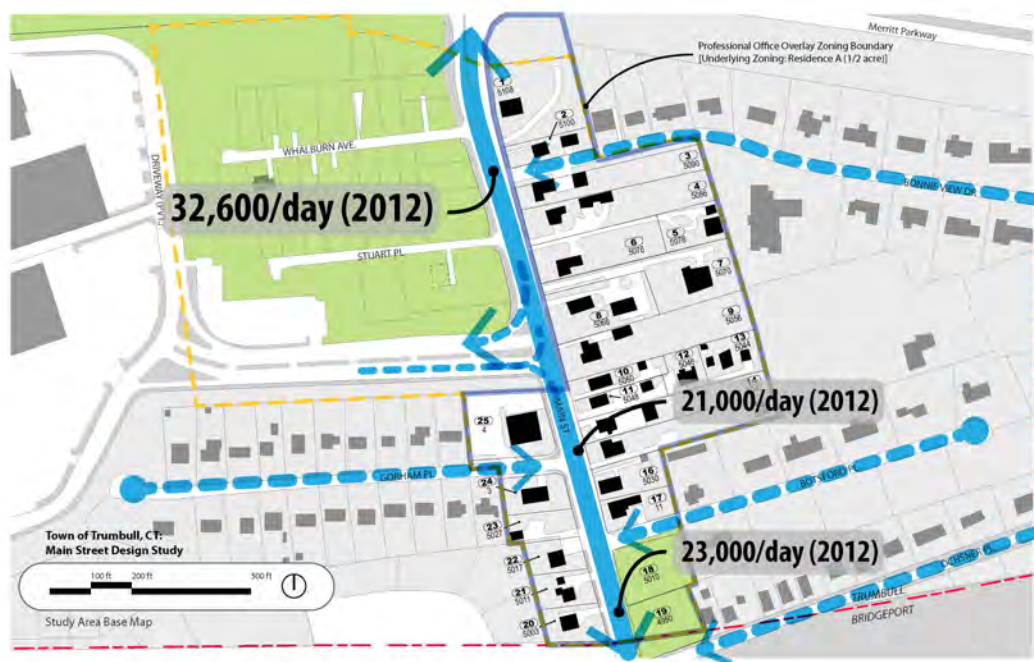




### *Traffic Circulation and Pedestrian Environment*

Traffic volumes along Lower Main Street are notably high, ranging from approximately 32,000 vehicles per day north of the entrance to the Westfield Mall to 21,000 vehicles per day south of the entrance near Botsford Place (see **Exhibit 6**). These traffic volumes at times delay vehicular ingress and egress to properties along the corridor, and to the adjacent residential neighborhood to the east and west of the Study Area (e.g. Gorham Place, Bonnie View Drive and Botsford and Oschner Places). Delays in entering and exiting traffic from Lower Main Street, especially at peak AM and PM hours were observed and expressed as a community concern the community workshops as part of this design study.

### **Exhibit 6: Vehicular Traffic Circulation and Volume – Lower Main Street Design Study, Trumbull CT (2014)**



Sidewalks are present on the west side of Lower Main Street only, providing pedestrian access to the mall from the north and south. The sidewalks do not continue south of the Bridgeport municipal line or north of the Merritt Parkway (see Exhibit 7). This limits pedestrian travel beyond the Study Area. Pedestrian linkage is also a problem within the Study Area. Pedestrians coming from the south along Lower Main Street are able to walk west into the mall as the sidewalk continues in that direction, however a missing pedestrian crosswalk at the signalized intersection at the mall's entrance impedes pedestrian further north along Lower Main Street. This condition is amplified by the fact that the median in the mall's access road provides insufficient refuge for pedestrian trying to cross the mall's entrance road (see Exhibit 7). Crossing the mall's entrance road on foot is especially dangerous considering the high volumes of traffic entering and exiting the mall.

**Exhibit 7: Pedestrian Environment (Missing Crosswalks) – Lower Main Street Design Study, Trumbull CT (2014)**



There are no sidewalks on the west side of Lower Main Street. This, along with the absence of a crosswalk across Lower Main Street at the mall's entrance, severely impedes area pedestrian circulation, not only for those living on Lower Main Street but also for residents of the adjacent residential community to the east (e.g. Bonnie View Drive and Botsford and Ochsner Places).

The absence of sidewalks also creates difficulty for school children waiting for or being dropped off by their school buses. There are four established school bus stops in the Study Area (see **Exhibit 8**), but presently school children are not provided a clear and safe path to these stops, and must presumably wait on private property along Lower Main Street. The 6, 8 and 14 bus lines of the Greater Bridgeport Transit, which travel along Lower Main Street to the Westfield Mall and beyond, service the area but no bus stops or shelters are provided.



**Exhibit 8: Transit Routes and School Bus Stops – Lower Main Street Design Study, Trumbull CT (2014)**



**Exhibit 9: Study Area Tree Canopy – Lower Main Street Design Study, Trumbull CT (2014)**





### *Community Character*

The conditions discussed above collectively provide the Study Area with an overall residential character (see Exhibit 11), which is reinforced by the significant amount of vegetation present along the Lower Main Street frontage and in the surrounding context (see Exhibit 9). Exhibit 10 identifies significant (mature) trees observed specifically along the Lower Main Street frontage. These trees should be preserved to the greatest degree practicable under any future redevelopment proposal, as they contribute significantly to the area's sense of place. The area's residential character contrasts starkly with that of found south of the municipal line in Bridgeport, where a variety of commercial and retail uses can be observed. This contrast helps the Study Area to function as a gateway to Trumbull, marking a sense of arrival. Collectively, these conditions suggest that any future redevelopment should seek to reinforce the area's strong residential character.

**Exhibit 10: Street Frontage Trees – Lower Main Street Design Study, Trumbull CT (2014)**



***Exhibit 11: Existing Residential Context and Community Character – Lower Main Street Design Study, Trumbull CT (2014)***





#### 4. Existing Regulatory Environment

The Study Area is zoned Residence Zone A, which allows for half-acre single family residential development and several other compatible uses, including municipal playgrounds and recreation facilities, farms and horticultural/wild life reserves, and family day care homes.<sup>1</sup> A Professional Office Overlay Zone (POOZ) applies to the east side of Lower Main Street from the Merritt Parkway, extending southerly to the Bridgeport City line and along west side of Main Street from the eastern entrance access driveway of the Trumbull Mall south to the Bridgeport City line (see Exhibit 1). The overlay zone permits limited development of professional offices, ideally through conversion of existing residential structures or new construction of a similar scale, density and coverage. The POOZ was created to “enhance the vitality and cohesion of designated areas by allowing an expanded list of approved professional office uses in preexisting residential structures or new structures that demonstrate unified architectural character with single family homes in the immediate area.”<sup>2</sup> While the overlay zone applies to two other areas in the Town, it appears to have encouraged little new development along Lower Main Street. Exhibit 12 summarizes the regulatory parameters for the Residence Zone A district and Exhibit 13 provides a summary for the POOZ.

**Exhibit 12: Residence A Zoning Parameters (Table) – Lower Main Street Design Study, Trumbull CT (2014)**

RESIDENCE A (1/2 acre) [UNDERLYING ZONING]										
Permitted Uses	Min. Lot Area	Max. Bldg. Height	Min. Floor Area		Req. Yards			Max. FDR	Parking	
			1st Floor	2nd Floor	Front	Side	Rear			
1-Family Dwelling	0.5 acre (21,780 sf)	40 ft (a)	1 Story	1,200	N/A	50 ft (a)	20 ft (a)	50 ft (a)	0.29	Max. 4 vehicles on lot Parking for other Uses (by discretion of P&Z based on ITE standards)
Playground/Parks/Conservation Area			1.5 Story	900	500					
Farms/Wildlife/Horticultural Reservations			2 Story	900	800					
Family Daycare Home										
Accessory Uses										
Garage										
Workshop										
Shed										
Temp. Storage										
Recreational Structures										
Temp. Parking of Rec. Vehicle										
Home Occupations (Article II, Sec. 7.5)										
Temp. In-Law Apartments										
By Special Permit										
Group Day Care Homes										
Non-Profit Senior Citizen Housing										
Cemeteries										
Churches										
Libraries, Museums, Firehouses										
Housing Projects for Elderly										
Hospitals, Sanitariums, Convalescent Homes										

NOTES:

(a) Also applies to pre-existing nonconforming residence uses except as otherwise specifically provided in these regulations.

The POOZ provides two options for professional offices in either existing or new structures:

- Build on a single lot where the maximum gross square footage is the largest between the pre-existing structure and 20% more than the average size of the two adjacent structures; or
- Consolidate two lots and build where the maximum gross square footage of professional office use is the largest between 2,900 sq. ft. or 20% more than the average size of the two adjacent structures.

These parameters are illustrated in Exhibit 14 below.

<sup>1</sup> Permitted accessory uses include garage, workshop, shed, recreational structures, and temporary parking of recreational vehicles, home

<sup>2</sup> Article II Section 2: Special Residential Zones



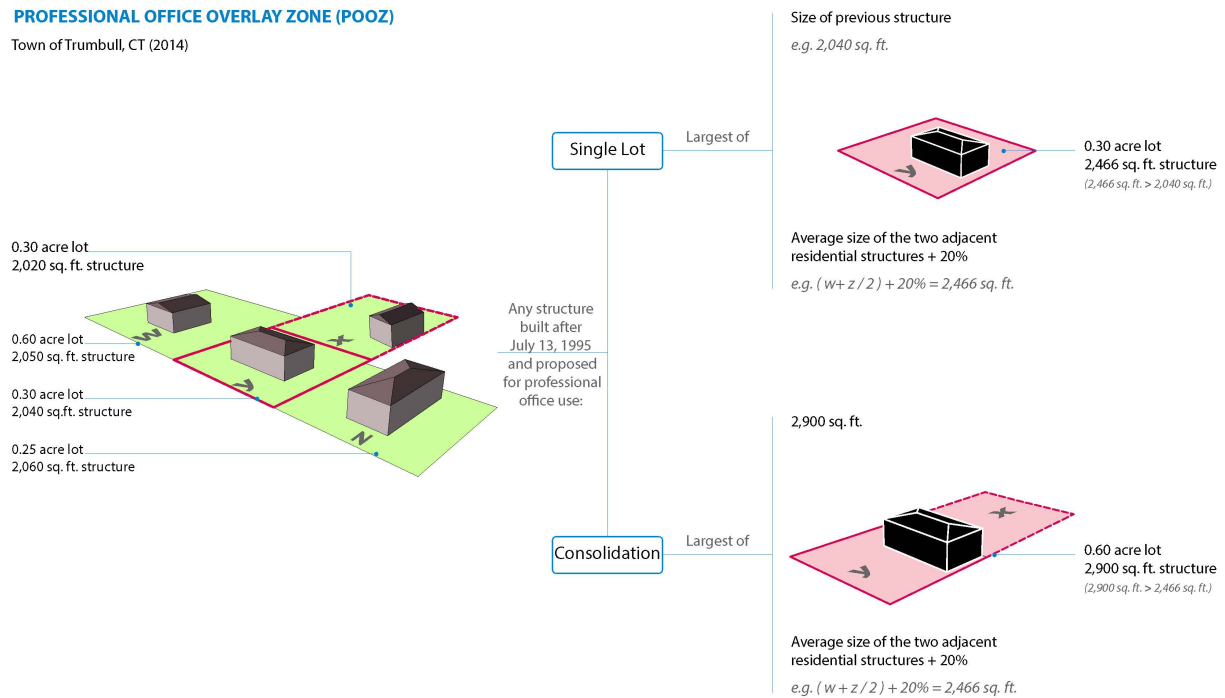
### Exhibit 13: POOZ Zoning Parameters (Table) – Lower Main Street Design Study, Trumbull CT (2014)

Town of Trumbull, CT: PROFESSIONAL OFFICE OVERLAY ZONING (POOZ)						
Permitted Uses	Residency	Max. Allowable Office Size	Coverage	Setback	Parking	Notes
Funeral Homes	Not Required	Size of previous principal structure [OR] no more than 20% larger than average size of two adjacent residential structures (whichever is larger)	25%	Similar to adjacent structures but not more than 75' from street R.O.W.	4 spaces per use (min.)	No on-street parking permitted
Law Offices						Any space above requirement shall be "contingency" - i.e. on permeable surface
Accountants						Parking in the rear and side yards only (not closer to street line than dwelling unit)
Architects		Consolidation of no more than 2 lots permitted, but if done then max. allowable of 2,900 sf or no more than 20% larger than two adjacent residential properties (whichever is larger)			1/200 sf (gross) for office uses	All parking designed to be connected to existing or future parking on adjacent sites
Engineers/Surveyors						Consolidation of driveways to minimize curb cuts
Medical Offices						Traffic/access/parking study required
Registered Dietitians						Must have appearance of residential property
Psychologists						Similar in size, height, character, scale and have similar setbacks to existing structures
Therapists						
Social Workers						
Nurse Clinicians						
Insurance Agencies						
Other Professional Offices						
Real Estate Offices						

### Exhibit 14: Graphic Illustration of POOZ Zoning Options – Lower Main Street Design Study, Trumbull CT (2014)

#### PROFESSIONAL OFFICE OVERLAY ZONE (POOZ)

Town of Trumbull, CT (2014)



The POOZ also requires professional office development to be residential in appearance and similar in size, height, character, and scale and have similar setbacks to existing structures. Off-street parking is designated to the rear and side yards only with minimum parking standards of four spaces per use or one space per 200 square feet of gross professional office space. All parking must be designed so that it may connect to existing or future parking on adjacent sites.

### *Discussion*

Our analysis of current regulatory allowances in the POOZ relevant to this design study suggests that they are insufficient to encourage professional office development along Lower Main Street. The low allowable professional office FAR combined with a 25-percent allowable lot coverage, and relatively high parking standards (5 spaces per 1,000 sq. ft. gross office space) help explain why the POOZ has not worked to successfully encourage office development along Lower Main Street as it has in other locations in the town. For example, the average area of any residential lot in the Study area is 21,962 square feet, and the average calculation of any residential lot's two adjacent structures plus 20-percent (as allowable in the POOZ) is 2,788 square feet. This suggests that the average professional office FAR allowable on any residential lot in the Study Area would be approximately 0.13. The POOZ does allow for parcel assembly, but limits this to a maximum of two (2) parcels. Under this scenario, the zoning permits a maximum allowable office component of 2,900 sq. ft. Estimating that a typical lot consolidation would result in a developable parcel of approximately one acre (i.e. 2 x 21,962 square feet), the resultant FAR for an average lot consolidation under the POOZ would be approximately 0.07 (about half that without parcel consolidation). These allowable FARs, along with the existing lot configurations (narrow, deep lots, including several flag lots with shared driveway access), also serves, in our opinion, as a disincentive to development.

To encourage professional office development on Lower Main Street, the Town would likely have to increase the allowable FAR for professional office to somewhere in the range of 0.20 to 0.30, as evidenced by a recent application for an approximately 8,500 sq. ft. project on two vacant properties in the Study Area. This proposal would translate into a FAR of 0.21 approximately equal to that permitted for residential development in the underlying Residence A zoning district. As the calculations above suggest, the POOZ presently permits roughly half of that amount of FAR under a single parcel redevelopment (e.g. 0.13), and about a quarter of the same under a two-lot consolidation scenario (e.g. 0.07).

Increasing allowable FAR for professional office to these levels, however, could create unintended traffic impacts on the surrounding area, especially for residents living in the area side streets (e.g. Bonnie View Drive and Botsford Place). Impact, however, would depend not only on the size of the office permitted, but also the type of office use placed (e.g. professional office versus medical/dental offices). For example, according to Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) standards, two (2) single-family homes on a lot would generate a total of 20 daily trips. General professional offices, defined as legal, real estate, accountancy, architectural offices, etc., would generate between 32 daily trips for a 2,900 square foot office to 88 daily trips for an 8,000 square foot configuration. Medical and dental offices, however, would generate significantly higher numbers of daily trips, ranging from 106 for a 2,900 square foot office to 290 for an 8,000 square foot configuration (see Exhibit 15 below).

**Exhibit 15: ITE Estimated Weekday Vehicular Trip Generation by Use and Building Size – Lower Main Street Design Study, Trumbull CT (2014)**

Land Use	Size	Unit	Daily			AM Peak			PM Peak		
			Entry	Exit	Total	Entry	Exit	Total	Entry	Exit	Total
Single Unit Family Homes	2	D.U.	10	10	20	1	1	2	1	1	2
General Office	2,900	S.F.	16	16	32	4	1	5	1	3	4
	6,000	S.F.	33	33	66	8	1	9	2	7	9
	8,000	S.F.	44	44	88	11	1	12	2	10	12
Medical/Dental Office	2,900	S.F.	53	53	106	6	1	7	3	9	12
	6,000	S.F.	109	109	218	11	3	14	6	17	23
	8,000	S.F.	145	145	290	15	4	19	8	22	30

Source: ITE Manual (2012)

BFJ Planning- August 2014

Given the existing high traffic volumes on Lower Main Street (approximately 32,000 vehicles per day near the Westfield Mall entrance), the higher trip generation estimates above would be de minimis because they represent only a very small incremental change to total traffic volume on Lower Main Street. However, due to the configuration of side streets adjoining the study area, and the fact that some offices would inevitably require driveway access to these streets, the resulting impacts from higher levels of commercial development could produce undesirable outcomes. Specifically, Bonnie View Drive, Botsford Place and Ochsner Place exit on to Lower Main Street, and allowing higher levels of commercial office development on parcels in the study area, especially on those situated on corner lots, could amplify existing conditions of delay for residents entering and exiting onto Lower Main Street. This concern was raised almost unanimously by area residents in the community workshops/meetings as part of this design study (as discussed in the following section).

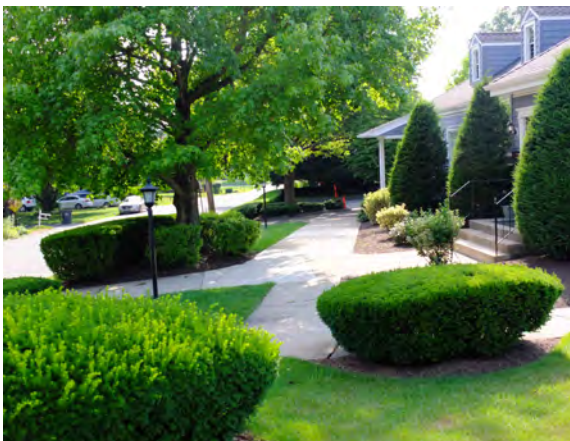
There are also potential visual impacts to consider from allowing increased levels of commercial uses along this portion of Lower Main Street. Many participants in the community workshops and members of the Planning and Zoning Commission expressed concern for how any new development might affect the existing residential character of Lower Main Street in Trumbull, which contrasts sharply to that found along the same roadway to the south in Bridgeport. Presently, Lower Main Street in Bridgeport accommodates a variety of commercial and residential uses ranging from fast-food restaurants, professional offices, large footprint grocery stores, and other non-residential uses (see Exhibit 16). The predominantly residential character found in Trumbull immediately north of the Bridgeport municipal line expresses the Town's character as conveyed in the Town's POCD and expressed by many of the workshop participants. The transition from a commercial mixed-use environment in Bridgeport to the predominantly residential character found in the Study Area allows Lower Main Street in Trumbull to effectively serve as a gateway to the town, marking arrival into Trumbull along Lower Main Street. While the Study Area does include limited commercial uses along the Lower Main Street frontage, including the Redgate Hennessy funeral home and the Westfield Mall, the funeral home is accommodated in a residential adaptive reuse building (and therefore appears contextual to the area), and the mall, a high intensity commercial use, is set well back from the roadway to the west of Lower Main Street. As such, it is sufficiently screened from view by trees and has minimal visual impact on the area (see Exhibit 17). These conditions help maintain the existing residential character of the study area.



**Exhibit 16: Mixed-Use Environment on Lower Main Street in Bridgeport – Lower Main Street Design Study, Trumbull CT (2014)**



**Exhibit 17: Contextual Commercial Use and Westfield Mall on Lower Main Street in Trumbull – Lower Main Street Design Study, Trumbull CT (2014)**



## 5. Community Input

BFJ Planning conducted two public workshop/meetings as part of this design study. The first was held in the Community Room of the Trumbull Town Library Main Branch on August 6, 2014 with approximately 40 participants. The second meeting was held at Helen Plumb Building on August 27, 2014 with approximately 30 participants. Detailed summaries of process and outcomes from both meetings are provided in the appendix of this report. The main outcomes of these meetings are summarized below.

### ***Workshop 1 (August 6, 2014):***

This workshop consisted of a presentation of existing conditions analysis by BFJ Planning and a facilitated community work session (charrette). The work session was organized into two parts: 1) an exercise to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunity and threats to the Study Area, and 2) an exercises to set goals and develop specific guidelines for the Study Area.

Participants identified the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the Lower Main Street Study Area:

#### *Strengths*

- Proximity and access to Merritt Parkway is beneficial for residents because it improves regional connectivity
- Tree canopy along Main Street and surrounding area
- Residential nature and character of the area especially on the side streets

#### *Weaknesses*

- Proximity and access to the Merritt Parkway creates passing traffic on Lower Main Street
- Ingress and egress from private properties and side streets difficult due to traffic and threatens safety
- Lack of sidewalks, streetlights, crossings, and streetscape improvements affect area character and connectivity
- Tension balancing area's potential for development and existing uses

#### *Opportunities*

- Enhance character of Trumbull by creating a gateway on Trumbull
- Lower Main Street frontage is appropriately sized for development that could support, enhance and preserve residential uses on the side streets.
- Improve sign control, conditions for pedestrians, buses and cars through traffic studies so as to enhance walkability and vehicular access to the mall

#### *Threats*

- Increased loss of sense of community and character due to increased traffic and undefined plans for development in the area
- Potential decrease of property values and residential quality of life on side streets
- Piecemeal zoning could produce unfavorable changes on Lower Main Street frontage

From these strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, the participants developed the following goals for the Lower Main Street Study Area:

- *Manage change so that it positively impacts side streets and improves the character of Lower Main Street and the Town of Trumbull.*
- *Maintain the area's residential feel*
- *Ensure that new development (commercial or otherwise) respect the scale and architectural character of the area*
- *Provide significant green buffers and appropriate traffic controls*
- *Provide sidewalks on both sides with hardscape (not vegetative) edges along street right-of-way*
- *Increase allowable FAR to enable development*
- *Protect residential side street enclaves and area quality of life*
- *Improve residential character and aesthetics of Lower Main Street*
- *Improve traffic quality in the area*
- *Improve property values of Lower Main Street and side street properties*
- *Allow limited professional office development to achieve neighborhood goals*

Participants articulated several strategies to implement these goals

- *Require all Lower Main Street properties to have driveways on Lower Main Street (i.e. not on to side streets), except for emergency vehicle access so as to reduce impact on side streets*
- *Require any future professional offices on Lower Main Street should have the appearance of single-family residential homes*
- *Allow higher FAR but adjust allowable FAR (square footage) by use of building*
- *Provide significant buffers around commercial zones*
- *Ensure Commercial uses should respect styles and architecture – encourage good design*
- *Design sidewalks with setbacks and hardscape buffers*
- *Design pathways, bus stops, lights, stops and crosswalks*
- *Consider additional traffic signals (possibly as Ochsner Place) to control traffic*
- *Limit curb cuts to decrease turns and congestion*
- *Allow development that limits visual impact*
- *Create strong design guidelines to maintain neighborhood character (colonial, craftsman styles)*
- *Reduce height limit to two stories*
- *Limit parking*
- *Use landscaping to maintain green buffer along Lower Main Street frontage*
- *Limit operating hours of commercial uses to minimize impacts on residential side streets*

From the information above, BFJ Planning developed the follow guidelines as summaries of the meeting.

### ***1. Planning and Zoning***

*Any new proposed planning framework for LMS must support, enhance and preserve the residential uses on the side streets while improving safety, cohesiveness and vibrancy along the corridor.*

### ***2. Streetscape and Functionality***



*A priority should be to design a safe street for all users by minimizing number of curb cuts, alleviating traffic, and building appropriate infrastructure for pedestrians, public transportation users, car drivers and mall visitors alike.*

### ***3. Design and Development Guidelines***

*New uses and higher density along LMS must follow specific planning and design guidelines to ensure that development is controlled and that it improves aesthetics, protects property values, and preserves the residential character of the area so as to function effectively as an attractive gateway to Trumbull.*

***Exhibit 18: Photos from the First Community Workshop (August 6, 2014) at the Trumbull Public Library – Lower Main Street Design Study, Trumbull CT (2014)***



***Workshop 2 (August 27, 2014):***

The second workshop/meeting was structured as a regular Planning and Zoning Commission meeting to review the findings of the first community workshop on August 8, and to hear preliminary recommendations for Lower Main Street by the consultant. To facilitate and guide the discussion BFJ Planning proposed a set of critical discussion points for the Planning and Zoning Commission. The points included (1) defining the future vision for Lower Main Street (preservation versus redevelopment), (2) the appropriate range of uses for the area, (3) the degree of regulatory flexibility the Planning and Zoning Commission would be willing to consider; and (4) appropriate development standards for the area (see Appendix B). These were discussed organically throughout the meeting.

The meeting opened with a discussion among the Planning and Zoning Commission members regarding a future vision for Lower Main Street. Of key concern was the tension between issues of preservation and redevelopment of the area. The Commission issued an affirmative statement that any new planning for the area must find a proper balance between these two approaches.

BFJ Planning presented the findings from the first community workshop and preliminary findings from Spinnaker Real Estate Partners, the development consultant to the project. These findings suggest that the POOZ in its current form is insufficient enough to encourage professional office development. This may be attributable to extant land prices, existing lot configurations and limited lot assembly possibilities, and location. Current zoning regulations, traffic problems and community opposition also appear to hinder professional office development on Lower Main Street. From a developer's perspective, the current zoning provides too little allowable FAR, and limited lot assembly option operates as a disincentive to development. Community concerns regarding traffic impacts and the zoning's requirement that any proposal must include a traffic study may also serve to discourage professional office development.

Spinnaker Real Estate Partners' research suggests potential market opportunities for several uses on Lower Main Street, including medical/dental offices, medium density residential (e.g. townhomes and/or apartments), and/or mixed-use residential-office development. Successful implementation of these uses would, however, require regulations that provide sufficient FAR. There would likely be market opportunity for other uses as well, including restaurant and retail, but these were not considered due potential impacts they might have on maintaining area's residential character.

***In summary, Spinnaker Real Estate Partners' analysis raised two alternatives:***

1. If the intention for Lower Main Street is to encourage professional office redevelopment (as indicated in the POOZ) then certain parameters in the POOZ should be adjusted to meet market feasibilities (e.g. increase FAR, allow for greater lot assemblage). In short, one option is to adjust the POOZ "to allow the market to do its job."
2. Alternatively, if the intention of the POOZ is no longer a desirable but the Town and community agree that some level of redevelopment is appropriate (as suggested by the Town's POCD) then other uses and regulatory strategies should be considered. These could range from allowing medium density residential uses or a mix of uses (residential and office) through a zoning change or a Planned Development District strategy.

BFJ Planning discussed these alternatives and presented a sketch site plan of medium density residential development for part of the Lower Main Street Study Area. The scenario contemplated

development happening gradually over time at a density sufficient to attract investment. The site plan also showed an internal circulation system to manage traffic and proposed streetscape improvements. In general the residents and the P&Z Commission expressed enthusiasm around the idea. The biggest concern was a potential increase in traffic due to more residents. However, it was publicly discussed that this type of development would produce less traffic than commercial, institutional or mixed-use programs.

In the discussion that followed, key points mentioned by the Planning and Zoning Commission included concerns of whether an approach too heavily invested in preservation will be sufficient to improve the Lower Main Street area. The Commission also expressed that any development for the area should meet a high design standard. Design guidelines and form-based codes were mentioned as possible options. Comments from the public echoed those mentioned in the previous public workshop, including those over traffic on Bonnie View Drive and Botsford Place and concern for maintaining the area's residential character. But there appeared to be an overall preference for medium density residential development over office uses, and recognition that higher densities would be necessary to spur investment. Several participants were skeptical regarding the market for medium density residential uses, and mentioned that land prices may necessitate densities beyond those the community would be willing to accept.

**Exhibit 19: Photos from the Second Community Workshop (August 27, 2014) at the Helen Plumb Building – Lower Main Street Design Study, Trumbull CT (2014)**





## 6. Development Scenario Matrix

Based on input received from the Planning and Zoning Commission, community participants and existing conditions, this study considered five (5) planning alternatives as scenarios, each of which balanced varying degrees of preservation and redevelopment for the Study Area.































































1. **No Change – Baseline Condition**
2. **Adjusted POOZ – Increase Allowable FAR and Coverage**
3. **Zoning Change – Medium Density Residential**
4. **Zoning Change – Medium Density Residential Mixed-Use (Commercial Office)**
5. **Planned Development District Redevelopment**

These scenarios were evaluated using a range of criteria based on the consultant team's observation of existing conditions, input received throughout the planning process (including planning objectives expressed during community workshops), and professional judgment (see Exhibit 20). For these criteria, impact evaluations are judgments based on preliminary analyses using readily available data. For example, when estimating potential traffic impacts, ITE manuals were referenced to inform evaluations, but more study and analysis would be needed using actual development proposals and extant traffic volumes to determine precise outcomes for any development scenario.

The first scenario is a baseline condition, accepting the POOZ in its current regulatory configuration. The second scenario (Adjusted POOZ) examines likely outcomes if the POOZ FAR and other regulatory conditions were flexed to allow approximately double the allowable FAR (e.g. 6,000 to 7,000 square feet of professional office). While more research would be needed to determine whether this level of FAR would be sufficient to encourage professional office development along Lower Main Street, the 6,000 to 7,000 square feet range was informed by discussions heard throughout the design study process. The third scenario examines a zoning change to allow medium density residential development, limited to smaller buildings with unit configurations ranging from duplex structures to those with six- or eight-units each. The fourth scenario examines a zoning change to allow mixed-use medium density residential and limited office development in the Study Area. Finally, the fifth scenario examines a full-scale redevelopment approach implemented by a Planned Development District. This considers wholesale redevelopment of the majority of properties in the Study Area, and as such differs significantly from the other scenarios discussed.


These scenarios are discussed in greater detail below.


## Exhibit 20: Development Scenario Matrix – Lower Main Street Design Study, Trumbull CT (2014)

Characteristics/Issues	(1) POOZ (as is) Baseline Condition	(2) POOZ (adjusted) (6,000-7,000 sf)	(3) Change Zoning (Med. Density Residential)	(4) Change Zoning (Mixed-use - Res/Office)	(5) Full Scale Redevelopment (Planned District Development)
Neighborhood Stability (No Change)					
Taps market potential					
Stabilizes west side of Main Street					
Allows prior office development proposal (catalyst)					
Provides property owner options					
Susceptible to hold-outs					
Minimizes traffic impacts (depending upon use)					
Allows for signalized traffic access at mall entrance					
Allows for shared parking opportunities					
Allows for market flexibility					
Preserves neighborhood character					
Contributes to tax base					
Creates strong positive image (gateway)					
Improves surrounding property values					

**LEGEND**

 = MINIMAL EFFECT

 = MODERATE EFFECT

 = STRONG EFFECT

### Scenario 1: Baseline Condition

As shown in Exhibit 20, the no change in the POOZ scenario (Scenario 1) would not likely result in any significant future professional office development in the Study Area, as evidenced by past trends. Therefore, it is estimated that little change to the area would occur, thus offering stability (defined as no neighborhood change) and preservation of existing neighborhood conditions. On the other hand, it would likely prevent realizing some of the objectives expressed in the POCD and discussed in the community workshops associated with this study, namely improving the area's aesthetics and circulation, and allowing for limited redevelopment. In short this approach, as has been evidenced in the past, would not likely meet market demand or provide market flexibility to encourage redevelopment, nor would it meet many of the other criteria listed in Exhibit 20.

### Scenario 2: Adjusted POOZ (Increase FAR and Coverage)

If the amount of allowable development square footage of professional office under the POOZ was increased to 6,000 to 7,000 square feet, as suggested in Scenario 2, this would more likely expand the market potential for that use (although not to the degree requested by the previous proposal for the vacant lots at 4950 and 5010 Main Street). Under this scenario, new development if designed with care could contribute to preserving the residential character of the area. This would be true for situations employing adaptive reuse of existing residential structures or new construction provided they adopted a residentially oriented design approach. Thus, as shown in Exhibit 20, Scenario 2 could positively affect surrounding property values. This scenario also offers moderate opportunity to property owners wishing to sell their properties on Lower Main Street, but also could produce unwanted traffic impacts for the residential community to the east.

### ***Scenarios 3 and 4: Zoning Change (Medium Density Residential or Mixed-Use)***

Scenarios 3 and 4 propose zoning changes to the Study Area, removing the POOZ entirely. Scenario 3 proposes allowing redevelopment to medium density residential uses in small unit configurations (e.g. 2-8 units per structure). Scenario 4 offer the same but allows for mixed-use development with some level of professional office use to occur within a predominantly medium density residential program. Both of these scenarios offer multiple benefits as shown on Exhibit 20, including responding to market demand and providing market flexibility to encourage development. This in turn would provide options for Lower Main Street property owners wishing to sell their properties. Scenarios 3 and 4 would likely help preserve neighborhood character and reinforce the existing gateway condition provided a high level of design is maintained. Additionally, these scenarios suggest that outcomes would be positive for adjacent area property values, and that signalized access could be created over time through cooperative easement agreements and the creation of an internal vehicular circulation system (e.g. a “rear lane”) serving a majority of properties on the east side of Lower Main Street. Of the 14 elements outlined in Exhibit 20, two expected outcomes would likely differ substantially between scenarios 3 and 4, namely, those relating to traffic and parking and contributions to the local tax base. Scenario 3 would likely produce fewer traffic impacts, but would not contribute tax revenue to the same degree as Scenario 4. Adding a professional office mixed-use element would likely generate more traffic than would a residential program alone. However, a reduction in overall parking demand through shared parking opportunities would be lost without the professional office program. Any portion of a mixed-use program that includes professional office would likely generate greater tax revenues for the Town than a correlative residential use.

### ***Scenario 5: Full-Scale Redevelopment (Planned District Development)***

The final scenario (Scenario 5) considers a potential full-scale redevelopment approach for the group of parcels on Lower Main Street between Bonnie View Drive and Bostford Drive (Lots 3-17 on Exhibit 1). This, it was envisioned, would be implemented through a Planned District Development (PDD) mechanism, as is discussed in the Town’s POCD. As a regulatory strategy, a PDD would provide broader development flexibility in terms of uses and densities, while also allowing the Town to regulate development so that it achieves important community-informed parameters. As such, a full-scale redevelopment approach could offer many benefits to the Study Area, resolving several difficult challenges (e.g. those relating to parcel consolidation, existing lot configurations, traffic impacts). For this reason, this scenario ranked positively on many of the elements examined in Exhibit 20. Ultimately, however, we find less preference for this full-scale redevelopment approach on two accounts: time and willing property owners. It could take many years to attract an interested, viable developer willing to invest the time and money necessary to acquire all properties for such an ambitious project. While several property owners from the subject area participated in the community workshop and expressed desire to redevelop, not all property owners were represented. Property owners who do not want to sell their property could substantially delay a full-scale redevelopment approach. This outcome can be most visibly seen across Lower Main Street on the majority mall-owned property where one property owner has elected to remain in place.



## 7. Recommendations

The analyses above, along with the substantial feedback received throughout the design study process, inform our primary recommendation for the Town to remove the POOZ from the Lower Main Street area and adopt regulations to encourage medium density residential development in the Study Area. This should be limited to parcels along the east side of Lower Main Street only (e.g. Lots 1-19 as listed in Exhibit 22). We also recommend that single-family residential properties within the study area and on the east side of Lower Main Street (e.g. parcels 20-24 as listed in Exhibit 22) remain as single-family residential uses. Finally, we recommend the Town seek to improve the streetscape conditions along Lower Main Street, implementing improvements either through development standards or by seeking a grant to allow them to happen ahead of development. These recommendations are discussed in detail below.

### **Encourage Medium Density Residential Development on East Side of Lower Main Street**

According to Spinnaker Real Estate Partners, market demand would likely be found for medium density residential rental uses in this part of the Town at a price point near or below that for existing higher-price point apartments in Trumbull. The baseline for this assessment of rental rates was the “Eaves Trumbull” apartments by Avalon Properties located off of Old Town Road. According to their website, rents for these apartments range from \$1.60 to \$1.80 per square foot, depending upon apartment size and configuration. Spinnaker Real Estate Partners estimates that rents for duplex, tri-plex and quad-plex configurations along Lower Main Street would likely be in the \$1.50 to \$1.60 per square foot range. These rates are estimated at a slightly lower rate than those for “Eaves Trumbull,” due to the Lower Main Street location. Larger townhouse configurations would likely demand a slightly higher rate. We see the greatest opportunity for success on lots 3 through 15 (as shown in Exhibit 22) as various combinations of this group of contiguous parcels could be assembled for development, but the strategy would also be viable for other parcels on the east side of Lower Main Street.

Allowing medium density residential redevelopment along Lower Main Street would accomplish several objectives expressed by both the Planning & Zoning Commission and the majority of participants in the public workshops, as summarized below.

- Medium Density Residential redevelopment would provide property owners with a high degree of flexibility, while also accomplishing many of the Town’s (and community’s) objectives. Under this strategy, redevelopment could occur incrementally, over time. Those property owners wishing to sell or redevelop would be permitted to do so, while those wishing to remain in place would also be able to do so without necessarily hindering others from redeveloping their properties. Thus, unlike full-scale redevelopment, an infill incremental redevelopment approach would be less vulnerable to a developer’s inability to assemble property. We provide and discuss an example of how this approach could work below (see Exhibits 23 and 24).
- For those wishing to redevelop their property, this approach would provide a necessary degree of flexibility regarding property assemblage, permitting a wide variety of parcel configurations and sizes. Those wishing to develop could consolidate any number (small or large) of pre-existing adjacent parcels in a variety of ways. New zoning should ensure that parcel consolidation does not reduce overall achievable FAR, as is the case in the current POOZ. This would ensure that developers would be able to realize an acceptable level of

return and develop higher quality products. Allowing such a degree of flexibility would not only likely help incentivize redevelopment in the area, but also not exclude opportunities for larger assemblages to occur, which would presumably help accomplish Town (and community) goals more efficiently (such as desired streetscape and traffic circulation improvements). As an added benefit, developers of smaller infill or adaptive reuse/modification projects would likely be local or regional developers interested in building and retaining ownership of the properties.

- As compared to full-scale redevelopment, allowing for medium density residential infill would not preclude potential adaptive reuse of existing structures, which could be subdivided and improved into duplex or triplex units with modifications and/or additions. With either adaptive reuse or new construction (or some combination thereof), the idea would be to encourage infill projects that would compliment the area's existing residential character. Proceeding in this fashion would help ensure that the area remains architecturally diverse. New construction could mix with the old, and each project would strive to reinforce the existing residential context without matching its neighbors precisely. Such architectural diversity is important because it is presently one of the area strengths. Such diversity would be difficult to maintain through a full-scale development approach designed as a single project.
- As compared to professional offices built at a similar density, medium density residential development would produce significantly less traffic and thus fewer traffic-related impacts on the surrounding neighborhood. This is especially true as compared to medical/dental offices (see Exhibit 15 above). This estimated traffic differential would allow property owners to develop their properties at residential densities necessary to make projects economically viable, while avoiding many of the traffic concerns expressed by area residents during the community planning process. For example, discussions were heard during the community meetings that an appropriate level of professional medical/dental offices for the area could be in the range of 5,000 to 6,000 square feet on an acre of land. Considering the ITE rates provided in Exhibit 15 (above), such a project would generate an estimated 218 vehicle trips per day. In comparison, a similarly sized medium density residential project of five units at 1,200 square feet each would generate approximately 66 vehicle trips per day. This suggests that the town could consider residential densities of six to eight dwelling units per acre with a maximum total gross square footage in the same range (5,000 to 6,000 square feet).
- Promoting medium density residential infill would not preclude creating an internal circulation system (e.g. "rear" lane) that links all properties between Bonnie View Drive and Botsford Place on the east side of Lower Main Street. Eventually, when complete, this rear lane could provide vehicular ingress and egress, allowing vehicles to enter and exit at the existing signalized intersection on Lower Main Street at the Westfield Mall entrance. This could be accomplished by requiring new development to place parking to the side and rear of buildings, and by designing parking areas in such a manner that they could be connected to existing or future parking on adjacent sites. Such requirements could be written into new zoning regulations in a similar fashion as they appear in the existing POOZ.

- Finally, medium residential development would help maintain and improve the existing residential character of the area, acting as a positive force to stabilize and protect local area residential property values, and reinforce the area's role as a gateway to Trumbull.

### **Illustrative Area Site Plan**

To illustrate how medium density residential development could work on Lower Main Street we provide a hypothetical development site plan for the area in Exhibit 23. The plan shows how development might occur for the block of lots between Bonnie View Drive and Botsford Place only, but other properties north and south of this location and on the east side of Lower Main Street could also develop accordingly. Exhibit 22 illustrates how development could occur in sequence, although any number of sequences would be possible. In this scenario, consolidations would occur over time for the following parcels:

- Lots 3 and 4 (1.6 acres total);
- Lots 6 and 8 (1.75 acres total);
- 9, 10 and 11 (1.75 acres total);
- Lots 14 and 15 (1.32 acres total); and
- Lots 15 and 16 (0.6 acres total)

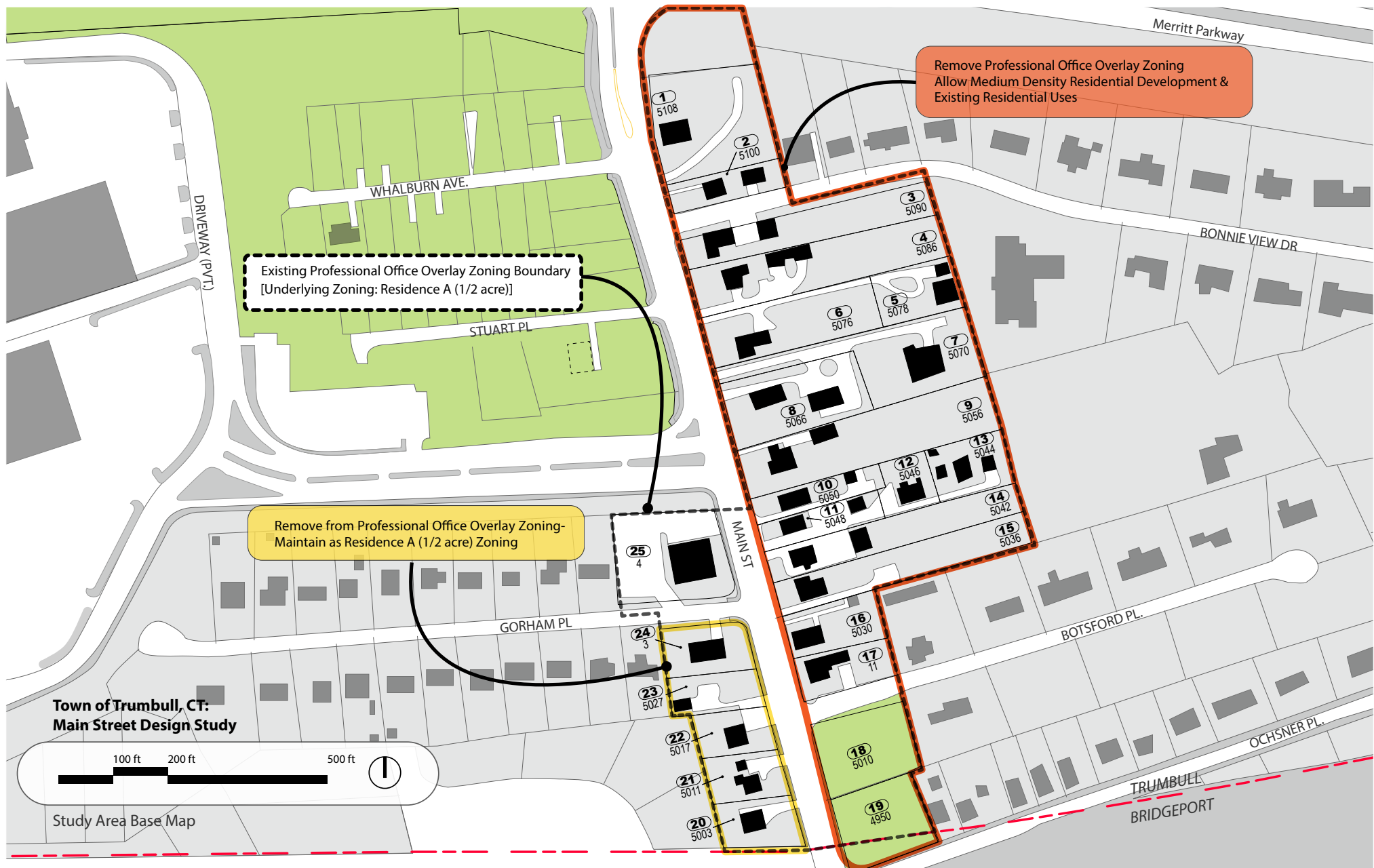
In the build out shown in Exhibit 23, each of the redeveloped lots shows a building with multiple units depending upon lot configuration and size. In this hypothetical example, each structure has between 4 and 8 housing units (apartments or townhouses). Note that the order in which these consolidations (and developments) might occur does not matter, nor does the fact that several of the flag lots are not part of the sequence (i.e. Lots 5, 7, 12 and 13). This scenario assumes that these properties would remain occupied by their present owners, and not be part of the redevelopment action. The program for this example is summarized in Exhibit 21 below.

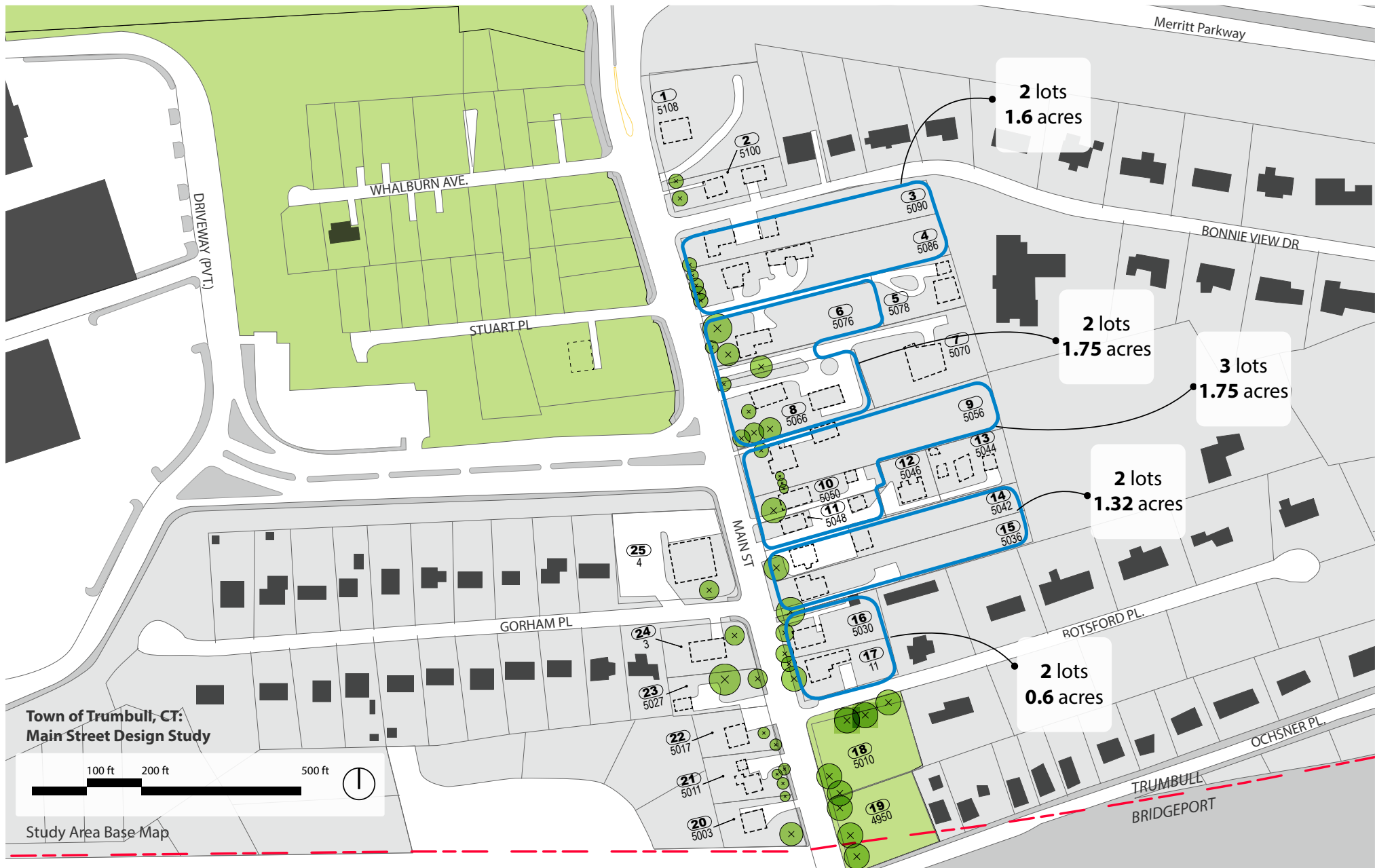
### **Exhibit 21: Summary of Illustrative Medium Density Development Scenario – Lower Main Street Design Study, Trumbull CT (2014)**

Lots	Address Number	Target Density (DU/Acre)	Total Area (Acres)	Number of Allowable Units	Number of Units Shown in Plan
3 and 4	5086, 5090	8	1.6	13	14
6 and 8	5066, 5076	8	1.7	14	8
9, 10 and 11	5048, 5050, 5056	8	1.7	13	8
14 and 15	5032, 5046	8	1.3	11	6
16 and 17	5030, 11 (Bostford Pl.)	8	0.6	5	6
TOTALS			6.9	55	42

While the target density in this example is 8 dwelling units per acre (DU/Acre), adjustments were made based on lot configuration and size (as can be seen in Exhibits 21 and 24). For example, consolidation of Lots 3 and 4 created a fairly wide (150 feet) and exceptionally deep (470 feet) parcel with an area of approximately 1.6 acres. This parcel has frontages along Lower Main Street and Bonnie View Drive. In this design scenario, we estimated that this parcel might comfortably accommodate additional units above the 8 DU/Acre threshold. Actual allowable densities, both by right or by special permit, would be determined by the Planning and Zoning Commission and written in new zoning, should it be adopted.











As shown in Exhibit 24, all buildings would accommodate parking to the rear of the buildings in attached garages on the ground floor. Visitor parking would be provided as surface parking either on garage aprons or elsewhere on the parcel. Handling the parking this way allows for higher building coverage as shown in the conceptual plan. If parking were accommodated solely as surface parking, the building coverage would have to be smaller. Placing parking areas and driveways to rear of buildings allows them to be connected to existing or future parking and driveways on adjacent sites. In this example, because not all existing lots are being redeveloped, accommodations are made to incorporate shared vehicular access for Lots 5, 7, 12, and 13 in the overall plan. Eventually, all parking areas and driveways would be connected to form a “rear lane” that connects to the signalized intersection at the mall’s entrance. Until this occurs, development would be required to provide and share driveways that exit directly on to Lower Main Street (as they do today). Once the rear lane has been completed, those driveways could be removed and access would be provided via the “rear lane” and signalized intersection.

Exhibit 24 also shows vehicular access being provided by driveways from Bonnie View Drive and Botsford Place. Once the “rear lane” is established, it may be possible to limit these access points to emergency vehicles only. However, we estimate that any residential traffic using these side street driveways will be minimal, and recommend that access to these driveways be maintained.

### **Preserve Single-Family Uses on West Side of Lower Main Street**

While the above example discussed above is hypothetical, it illustrates how parcels along Lower Main Street could redevelop with medium density residential uses. We recommend, however, that properties on the west side of Lower Main Street south of Gorham Place be maintained as single-family residential uses. This recommendation is informed by property sales data analysis and observation. According to online property sales data sources<sup>3</sup> eight of the 25 properties in the Study Area have transferred ownership since 2005. These include five properties on the east side of Lower Main Street and three on the west side. Those that sold on the east side include address numbers 4950 and 5010, which were demolished for a proposed medical office redevelopment, and three other residential properties (address numbers 5036, 5050, and 5070), all of which are rental properties. On the west side of Lower Main Street, address numbers 5003, 5011 and 5017 also transacted during this period and all are owner-occupied single-family residences. These sales figures support anecdotal findings from the public workshops. Several people who live on the east side of Lower Main Street mentioned difficulty in selling their properties. This does not appear to be the case on the west side of Lower Main Street, and our observation suggests that these properties are better maintained than others in the Study Area (see Exhibit 25). In our estimation, the properties on the west side of Lower Main Street represent a small but cohesive residential enclave, and should therefore be preserved as such. We would also hold this recommendation whether or not the Town decides to act on any of the other recommendations in this report (e.g. to adjust the POOZ or adopt an alternate regulatory strategy). We also recommend that these five parcels be removed from the existing POOZ.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.zillow.com](http://www.zillow.com) (accessed 08-01-2014)

***Exhibit 25: Single-Family Residences on West Side of Lower Main Street Study Area  
– Lower Main Street Design Study, Trumbull CT (2014)***



**Architectural Design and Streetscape Improvements**

Ensuring a high level of design for new construction on Lower Main Street, not only for the buildings but also the streetscape will be important for area revitalization. To accomplish this, the design of new development will have to be handled with care and attention to detail. High quality design in multi-unit buildings is created through detail, scale and proportion, recognizing the role of each and employing a traditional architectural vocabulary as a base of form. These strategies would help ensure that larger buildings appear appropriately scaled to an existing residential context. For example, as a building's dimensions increase, it is not enough to simply enlarge all elements proportionately. Rather, creating more elements, maintaining the proportions and scale of each, and employing them strategically to create rhythm across expansive walls have long been used to design large-scale buildings. As was presented at the second public meeting, we provide some examples of well-design medium density residential projects below (see Exhibit 26).



**Exhibit 26: Examples of well-designed medium density residential development.**

These photos show how larger residential buildings with multiple units can be designed to fit into a surrounding single-family residential context. Of note for the Lower Main Street Study Area is Example A) in Hillsboro, OR, which presents as strong street frontage and attached garages in the rear. Each unit appears as a large house from the street, but has four or five residential units.

A) Brighton Street, Orenco Station, Hillsboro, OR (Unit Size: Various 1,600-2,200 sq. ft.)



B) Brook Street, Eastchester, NY (Unit Size: 1,600 sq. ft.)



C) East Putnam Avenue, Cos Cob, Town of Greenwich, CT (Unit Size: Various 1,400-1,800 sq. ft.)





We recommend several key streetscape improvements including installing sidewalks on the east side of Lower Main Street and providing improved decorative lighting throughout the area. These improvements were discussed during the public outreach process and received positive support. We also recommend two new crosswalks to allow pedestrians to safely cross both Lower Main Street and the mall's eastern entrance road. These improvements would achieve several important objectives mentioned by participants in the public workshops:

- Link new development and the existing residential enclaves to the existing pedestrian network along Lower Main Street;
- Create a safer environment for school children meeting and disembarking from school buses;
- Reinforce (and maintain) the Lower Main Street Study Area as a gateway to Trumbull.

Sidewalk and lighting improvements could be provided as part of development standards in the zoning. Understandably, this approach would be dependent upon the market and could take some time. As such, improvements would occur in a piecemeal fashion over time. Alternatively, we recommend that the Town seek a grant to fund these improvements. This would provide a safer pedestrian environment for school children sooner and likely produce a higher quality outcome, as the project would be designed and implemented cohesively as a single project. Installing these improvements ahead of development would also likely create a more attractive environment for residential investment on Lower Main Street.

As part of these streetscape improvements, we also recommend that the Town consider wrapping sidewalks along the frontages of Bonnie View Drive and Botsford Place to the rear property lines of corner parcels on Lower Main Street. This would help protect pedestrians from vehicles entering and exiting any new development along Lower Main Street. We also recommend that new sidewalks to the greatest extent practicable include a soft- or hardscape buffer between the sidewalk and the vehicular right-of-way to protect pedestrians from the fast moving traffic along Lower Main Street.

New street lighting on Lower Main Street could also help improve the area's appearance and function as a gateway into Trumbull. Presently, street lighting is limited to high poles along the roadway, which offer no relation to pedestrian scale or sense of place. Installing new decorative and appropriately scaled lighting, and tying these into a broader signage strategy for the area could help improve sense of arrival and place. The Town has attractive signs marking arrival and departure from Trumbull, but these are in need of refurbishment (see Exhibit 27). A coordinated signage and lighting program could extend to include new gateway and decorative street signs for the area to help create a stronger sense of identity for the Lower Main Street residential neighborhood. An example of a coordinated signage and lighting program is provided in Exhibit 28.

Finally, we recommend that any streetscape improvement and or redevelopment plan for the area should also seek to protect as many of the existing mature trees that line both sides of Lower Main Street as practicable (see Exhibit 10). These trees contribute substantially to area's character and sense of place, and should therefore be maintained.

**Exhibit 27: Existing Lower Main Street Gateway Signage – Lower Main Street Design Study, Trumbull CT (2014)**



**Exhibit 28: Examples of Coordinated Informational Signage Program**

This image shows an example of a coordinated informational signage program. This covers all municipal and public signage, including traffic, street and points of interest. Developing a coordinated signage program can improve sense of place and visual appearance.



### *Design Guidelines*

To ensure new residential uses will contribute positively to the residential character of the area, we recommend the Town specify design requirements in general form in any future zoning for the area, and develop a separate design guidelines manual. Presently, the POOZ requires professional office development to be “residential in appearance and similar in size, height, character, and scale” and to have “similar setbacks to existing structures.” The zoning also states that preexisting residential structures or new structures should “demonstrate unified architectural character with single-family homes in the immediate area” (§2.1.1 Trumbull Zoning Regulations Rev. 07-11-13). While the intention is clear, such language is susceptible to broad interpretation.

We therefore recommend that the Town to consider developing specific design guidelines for Lower Main Street to serve as the basis for the planning, design and evaluation of new development in the area. Generally, design guidelines are presented in a handbook or pattern book that serves to guide residents, developers, and design professionals wishing to build new development. By doing so, the guidelines attempt to provide those wishing to build with a clearer picture of what to expect when appearing before the Town’s Planning and Zoning Commission, thus simplifying and expediting the review, permit and development process. Applicants are more likely to “get it right” the first time by reviewing established design guidelines, and therefore avoid expensive delays, public controversy and project redesign. Should the Town elect to proceed this way, the guidelines should be written so as not to limit creativity or diversity; instead they should attempt to create a higher standard of design for the built environment in the area.

The Trumbull Planning and Zoning Commission is not authorized to consider aesthetics as part of discretionary review. While this is a correct interpretation of Connecticut state statutes, some jurisdictions do provide their commissions greater freedom in reviewing architectural aspects of projects. Other jurisdictions have found utility in creating an Architectural Review Board (ARB) as authorized under Connecticut state law. This may be something the Town wishes to consider, if only on a limited basis to implement improvements in the Lower Main Street Study Area. If so, then the design guidelines discussed above could be implemented in one of three ways:

- As a “reference document”—The guidelines document is recognized solely as a reference document for property owners and developers wishing to build. Under this scenario, the Town does not formally adopt the document;
- As an “advisory document”—The guidelines document can be accepted by the Town as an advisory document for use by the Planning and Zoning Commission and/or Architectural Review Board; or
- As a “regulatory document”—The guidelines document can be adopted as a regulatory document, meaning that the guidelines become compulsory as part of the Zoning Ordinance.

In absence of an architectural review board (ARB) and given present limits on the Planning and Zoning Commission’s authority to consider aesthetics, this study recommends that the Town employ the guidelines as a “reference document.” Should the Town decide to establish an ARB, this study recommends that the Town formally accept the design guidelines as an “advisory document” for use by the ARB. Under this form, the document serves a guide to the board, but is non-binding (thus allowing flexibility). By formally accepting the guidelines as an advisory document, the guidelines would carry more weight than a reference document. This ensures greater compliance and consideration by developers.



## Appendix

- A. *Public Workshop 1 Summary Report*
- B. *Public Workshop 2 Summary Report*
- C. *Spinnaker Real Estate Partners Project Memorandum*

## APPENDIX A: PUBLIC WORKSHOP 1 SUMMARY REPORT

Lower Main Street Design Study

*Trumbull, CT*

Public Workshop

August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014

**BFJ Planning**

Jonathan Martin

Isabel Aguirre

## LOWER MAIN STREET DESIGN STUDY

Public Workshop August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Lower Main Street, from the Merritt Parkway south to the Bridgeport City line (approximately Ochsner Place) in Trumbull CT, is undergoing a design study in order to ensure a planned and coordinated framework for potential future development along portions of the corridor. As part of the study, three planners from BFJ Planning facilitated a Community Workshop and input session at the Community Room of the Trumbull Town Library Main Branch on August 6<sup>th</sup> 2014. The Trumbull Planning and Zoning Commission and members of the Lower Main Street community attended the workshop that consisted of an existing conditions analysis presentation from BFJ Planning and a work session. The work session was organized in two parts. The first one, examined the vision and goals for Lower Main Street and the second one looked at specific design guidelines and layout of the corridor.

PART 1		PART 2	
Individual/ 5 mins	Personal Vision: Appetizer Questionnaire	Group work/ 15 mins	Draft Layout
Group Work/ 30 mins	Issues/Opportunities: SWOT Analysis and Community Goals	Group work/ 15 mins	Draft Guidelines
Group Work/ 10 mins	Report Back to Group	Group work/ 10 mins	Report Back to group

The community workshop attracted residential and commercial property owners, residential tenants, developers and commissioners interested on discussing goals, challenges and ideas for Lower Main Street. Attendees were distributed into three different working tables facilitated by BFJ staff where public input was shared, organized and presented to other group works. The present document shows the aggregated data and comments from each working table. The appendix includes the detailed agenda and content of the workshops and pictures from the day of the event.



**PART 1:**

## Exercise 1 Vision for Trumbull

NAME	ADDRESS	WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO SEE HAPPENING ON LOWER MAIN STREET:
Wes Gallaway	65 Bonnie View Drive.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. New England vernacular character.</li> <li>2. Enhanced residential values.</li> <li>3. Majestic trees.</li> <li>4. Business that don't threaten the family neighborhood character.</li> </ol>
Alexis Koulouris	Not provided.	I would like the lots on Botsford Place and Ochner Place to stay at 2,900 sq. ft. size of buildings.
Patricia Galloway	Not provided.	Maintain the residential character especially on the East Side of Main St there is plenty space for commercialization on the mall side. Also, putting business on East side will exacerbate traffic problems.
Cheryl Miolene	Not provided.	No building entrance or exit onto Botsford Place. To maintain and preserve the integrity of one neighborhood and keep the spirit of how the design district was originally intended.
Vicki Nye	Not provided.	My concern is the traffic on Main Street. I live on Gorham Pl and it is already an issue to make a left out of Gorham. In Nov-Jan it's impossible. I do not understand the need to convert more homes into business. What is the point of pushing families out of Trumbull?
Robert and Lynn Madar	Not provided.	Maintain the residential "look" with low traffic impact.
John Miolene	Not provided.	Keep traffic limited on Botsford Place.
Theron Canevari	Not provided.	To keep the residential feel and residential size homes and landscape.
Dino T	Not provided.	Development of area that is right for Trumbull, neighbors and investors taking into consideration the needs of all.
Peter Toomey	Not provided.	Better understanding of conditions and needs between the residents and the commercial property owner.
Dave Anand	5010 Main Street and 4950 Main Street.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stone walk of Trumbull.</li> <li>2. Professional building with higher "FAR".</li> <li>3. Nature forces are in play and changes of progress will occur -I cannot say when, but they will-.</li> </ol>
Albert Mastri	5042 Main Street.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase size of buildings proposed.</li> <li>2. Sidewalks.</li> <li>3. Keep buildings and developments stylish.</li> <li>4. Create jobs.</li> <li>5. Have people use Madison Avenue for traffic from mall.</li> </ol>

**PART 1:****Exercise 1 Vision for Trumbull**

Jamie Bratt	Not provided.	<p>If there is going to be redevelopment at all:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A cohesive redevelopment character, not hodge-podge, minimize curb cuts.</li> <li>2. Top notch landscaping.</li> <li>3. Signature gateway.</li> </ol>
Joseph Kalemkerian	Not provided.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To keep the residential character of this area, many families have invested considerable money to live in this area. There are many other areas in Trumbull that can be developed for professional and commercial use.</li> </ol>
Robin Gottheil	94 Botsford Place.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stay residential neighborhood without impact on dead-end street.</li> <li>2. Not giving lower main street development to greedy developers or rewarding run down homes.</li> </ol>
Dianna Pappas	85 Botsford Place.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The residential neighborhoods (side streets) remain in the same condition that they are in currently. Families move in because of how it is now, too much major change is unfavorable.</li> </ol>
James McCarlan	Main St. and Bonnie View Drive.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No more traffic turnarounds on Bonnie View Drive from cars making turn mistakes on Lower Main Street and the Parkway.</li> <li>2. Beautification of neighborhood.</li> </ol>
Not provided.	Not provided.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Keep it residential but not low income like Avalon Gates. Business uses over low income.</li> </ol>
D. Macal	Not provided.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ochsner Place-Alternate side of street parking.</li> <li>2. Residential area maintained.</li> </ol>
Not provided.	Not provided.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Keep residential plus professional office.</li> </ol>
Not provided.	Not provided.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Allow medical facilities that are useful for 3 to 5 doctors. 8,000 to 8,500 sq. ft. buildings.</li> </ol>
Not provided.	Not provided.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To remain a residential area.</li> </ol>
Not provided.	Not provided.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Build business revenue.</li> </ol>
Not provided.	Not provided.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Protect adjacent residences from over development side street traffic.</li> <li>2. Increase property values.</li> <li>3. Increase young professional residential ownership.</li> </ol>
Not provided.	Not provided.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop business tax dollars.</li> </ol>

**PART 1:****Exercise 1 Vision for Trumbull (BFJ Summary)****WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO SEE HAPPENING ON LOWER MAIN STREET (MAJOR THEMES):****Common themes:**

1	A safe street with better control of access and egress to and from driveways.
2	Cohesive redevelopment along LMS rather than lot by lot approach.
3	Lower Main Street as a gateway to Trumbull.
4	Keep residential character especially on interior streets (Botsford, Ochsner and Gorham).
5	Appropriate landscaping that preserves tree canopy and improved streetscape that creates better conditions for buses, pedestrians and drivers.



**PART 1:**

## Exercise 2 SWOT Analysis

TABLE	STRENGTHS
1	Access to Merritt Parkway. Residential nature and character of the area.  Side street enclaves with no through traffic.
2	Town involvement can advance planning. Potential development as gateway to Trumbull. Not too much noise despite of high traffic. Significant tree canopy.
3	Trees. Pride in ownership: little neighbor turnover. Friendly, safe and quiet. Affordable for new families. Easy access to Parkway. Frenchtown school district.  Good proximity and quiet. Low traffic on Botsford (Cul de Sac).  Bus stop at top of Botsford. Police presence at top of Botsford. Family neighborhood.

TABLE	WEAKNESSES
1	Closeness to the Merritt Parkway. High traffic on Lower Main Street is a disadvantage to side street residents.
2	A lot of dust and soot from traffic. Egress onto Lower Main Street and traffic. Lack of sidewalks and no buffers on existing sidewalk. Deterioration of existing housing on Lower Main Street and lack of maintenance.  Not enough tax and job generation. Loss of prior sense of community and scale -now it is just a corridor. Lack of safety for school buses. Lack of police surveillance.
3	Cutting down of trees and blight by dumping on vacant sites. Houses on Main Street are not visually appealing and there are no sidewalks.  Premature demolition of buildings. Overflow of traffic and parking on Botsford Place from adjacent funeral home.  Traffic and pedestrian safety (an accident study could help). Holiday traffic cannot make left hand turn out of Botsford Place. Cars on Lower Main Street do not stop for school buses and pass. Exit from Botsford to Lower Main Street views are sometimes obstructed by plowed snow.

**PART 1:**  
Exercise 2 SWOT Analysis

TABLE	OPPORTUNITIES
1	Streetscape and building improvements. Shared access driveway across from mall light. Enhance character and create gateway on Lower Main Street. Build sidewalks.
2	Gateway. Develop traffic studies and find support for signals and traffic control. Increase and improve maintenance and curb appeal.  Increase revenue and jobs.
3	Curb appeal: size appropriate for development.  Fix dilapidated homes. Move entrance to the mall to the North. Maintain buffer of mall: Mall frontage to professional overlay zone to maintain character. Upscale residential townhouses for business professional commuters. Join lots with restrictions from homes.

TABLE	THREATS
1	Increased traffic on side streets. Lose residential character of Main Street. There is no development (professional) under present zoning. Main Street houses are in disrepair.
2	Increased traffic egress. Need for more traffic lights which will create more congestion. Change in residential character that will decrease quality of life and decrease property values. If development happened there would be more noise and light pollution.
3	Piece meal zoning changes can affect traffic congestion and safety of children.  Decrease of property values and loss of residential quality. Change in quality of life -change in families to business. Underutilized commercial space (no tenants). Increased traffic.  The impact of development on side streets.

**PART 1:**  
Exercise 2 SWOT Analysis (BFJ Summary)

STRENGTHS		WEAKNESSES	
1	Proximity and access to Merritt Parkway is beneficial for residents because it improves connectivity.	1	Proximity and access to the Merritt Parkway creates passing traffic on Lower Main Street.
2	Tree canopy along Lower Main Street.	2	Ingress and egress from private properties and side streets exacerbate traffic and threatens safety.
3	Residential nature and character of the area especially on side streets (Bonnie View Drive, Botsford, Ochsner Place).	3	Lack of sidewalks, street lights, crossings, streetscape and character.
		4	Tension balancing area's potential for development and existing uses.
OPPORTUNITIES		THREATS	
1	Enhance character of Trumbull by creating gateway on Trumbull.	1	Increased loss of sense of community and character due to increased traffic and undefined plans for development.
2	Size of block is appropriate for development that could support, enhance and preserve residential uses on side streets.	2	Potential decrease of property values and residential quality on side streets.
3	Better sign control, conditions for pedestrians, buses and cars through traffic studies and better designed access to the mall.	3	Piece meal zoning that will produce unfavorable changes on the street.



**PART 1:**  
Exercise 2: Goal Setting

TABLE	GOALS
1	Manage change in the way that it will positively impact side streets and is suitable for residents and improves the character of Lower Main Street and the Town of Trumbull.
2	Maintain residential feel. Commercial use needs to respect scale and architectural style. Significant buffer zones and traffic controls. Sidewalks on both sides, not right up on the curb, hardscape to buffer. Increase FAR to enable development.
3	Protect residential side street enclaves and quality of life. Improve residential character and aesthetics of Lower Main Street. Improve traffic quality of area. Improve property values of Lower Main Street and side street properties. Allow limited professional development to achieve neighborhood goals.

**PART 1:**  
Exercise 2: Goal Setting (**BFJ Summary**)

THEME	GOALS
Planning and Zoning	Constitute a planning framework that will allow different uses and higher density along Lower Main Street. Zoning must protect and enhance the existing residential uses and promote an attractive gateway into Trumbull through a safe, cohesive and vibrant Lower Main Street.
Streetscape and Functionality	Design a safe street for all users by minimizing number of curb cuts, alleviating traffic and building the appropriate infrastructure for pedestrians, public transportation users, car drivers and mall visitors.
Cohesiveness between Lower Main Street and Side Streets	New development on Lower Main Street must support, enhance and preserve the residential uses on the side streets while improving safety and cohesiveness along the corridor.

**PART 2:****Exercise 2: Draft Guidelines**

TABLE	GUIDELINES
1	<p>Lower Main Street properties should have Lower Main Street driveways only. Except for emergency access.</p> <p>All professional offices on Lower Main Street to have appearance of single family residential homes.</p> <p>Identify square footage (allowable) by use of building.</p>
2	<p>Significant buffers around commercial zones.</p> <p>Commercial uses should respect styles and architecture.</p> <p>Sidewalks designed with setbacks.</p> <p>FAR should be higher but still keep character of area.</p> <p>Hardscape buffer for sidewalks.</p> <p>Design pathways, bus stops, lights, stops and crosswalks.</p> <p>Include crosswalks from Old Town Road and Merritt Parkway, especially where there are bus stops and people have to cross to opposite side.</p> <p>Have more traffic lights but not too close from each other</p> <p>Driveway placement off of Main Street would decrease traffic in interior streets.</p> <p>Limit curb cuts to decrease turns and congestion</p> <p>If development were to be allowed proper design needs to be enforced and property value of homes on interior streets maintained.</p>
3	<p>Allow development that limits visual impact.</p> <p>Strong design guidelines to maintain neighborhood character (colonial, craftsman).</p> <p>Have two story limit</p> <p>Limit parking.</p> <p>Reequipe landscaping to maintain green buffer.</p> <p>Limit operating hours to prevent impact on residential streets.</p>

## LOWER MAIN STREET DESIGN STUDY

Public Workshop August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014



*BFJ Presentation on existing conditions.*



*Working tables sharing the discussions with the rest of the workshop participants.*



## LOWER MAIN STREET DESIGN STUDY

Public Workshop August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014 (120 mins total)

### 1. Introductions (5 mins.)

### 2. Presentation (20-25 mins.)

BFJ will present existing conditions analysis, emerging conditions and understanding of the site. Also, the exercises of the workshop will be explained.

### 3. Working Session PART I: Visioning (45 mins.)

#### 3. A. Exercise 1. (Individual) (5 mins.)

Each participant will have a piece of paper and will be asked to respond the following and then share with table.

"As a member of the **Lower Main Street Community**, one of the things that I would like to see happening there is \_\_\_\_\_."

#### 3. B. Exercise 2: Issues/Opportunities (Group work) (15 mins.)

<b>STRENGTHS</b> This (these) characteristic(s): _____ is (are) an advantage of Lower Main Street.	<b>WEAKNESSES</b> This (these) characteristic(s): _____ is (are) a disadvantage of Lower Main Street.
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b> This (these) element(s): _____ is (are) a potential advantage for Lower Main Street.	<b>THREATS</b> This (these) element(s): _____ could potentially cause trouble to Lower Main Street.

#### 3. B. Exercise 2: Goals (Group work) (15 mins.)

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>GOALS</b></p> <p>List some of the most important things you would like to achieve in Lower Main Street:</p>
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### 3. C. Exercise 3: Report back (10 mins.)

Have one person in the group work to name one strength, one weakness, one opportunity and one threat. In addition have that same person mention three goals for Lower Main Street.

#### 4. Working Session PART II: LMS Layout (45 mins.)

4. A. Exercise 1: Draft Layout (15 mins) Based on work completed in Part I

The two tables will have a large scale map of the study area. The study area will be at a specific scale (1:100) and annotated with general dimensions. Additionally the participants will receive a “stencil” of three different building sizes and will be asked to draw potential development scenarios using the stencil. The purpose of this exercise is to (1) familiarize the Lower Main Street community with planning issues that affect the area and (2) receive input of what can happen in the area and the contingency measures that must be considered.

4. B. Exercise 2: Draft Guidelines (15 mins) Reinterpretation of goals and ideas developed in work session.

After the 20 mins discussion and drafting on the study area map, participants and facilitators will work on setting concrete guidelines based on the ideas discussed.

The guidelines can fall in the following categories or others:

	<b>GUIDELINES:</b> Access, uses, building height and design, parking, buffers, streetscape or other.

4. C. Exercise 3: Report back (10 mins.)

The two working groups will share in 5 minutes the guidelines and categories discussed.

## 5. Summary. Next Steps (5 mins.)

## APPENDIX B: PUBLIC WORKSHOP 2 SUMMARY REPORT

### Lower Main Street Design Study

*Trumbull, CT*

Planning and Zoning Committee Presentation and Meeting  
August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014

# BFJ Planning

Jonathan Martin

Isabel Aguirre

## LOWER MAIN STREET DESIGN STUDY

Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting 08.27.2014

*Introduction*

On Wednesday August 27<sup>th</sup> 2014, twenty-three members of the Town of Trumbull Lower Main Street (LMS) community, members of the Town of Trumbull Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Commission, and the Town of Trumbull Director of Planning, Jamie Bratt, worked with two planners from BFJ Planning on the critical issues regarding the future of LMS.

The work session took place at the Helen Plumb Building and was introduced by Chairman Anthony Chory. Chairman Chory shared his view about the uniqueness of the opportunities that LMS offers. However, a Professional Office Overlay Zone (POOZ) designated on LMS has not encouraged vitality and cohesion as it originally intended. He also expressed the urgency to define a shared vision for the corridor in order to regulate potential development. To facilitate and guide the conversation, BFJ Planning proposed a set of questions to the P&Z Commission. The questions covered (1)the future vision for LMS, (2)land use along LMS, (3)the degree of regulatory flexibility, and (4)potential development design standards. (See Critical Discussion Points for Trumbull Planning & Zoning Commission Working Session at end of the document). Preservation versus development was defined as the overarching and defining question for LMS.

*Part 1*

After the introduction from Chairman Chory, BFJ shared with the P&Z Commission and the public the results from the community workshop that had taken place on August 6<sup>th</sup>. A detailed report on content, methodology and results of the community workshop had been previously submitted to the Town of Trumbull. The workshop was summarized in the following three key findings:

**1. Planning and Zoning**

A new proposed planning framework for LMS must support, enhance and preserve the residential uses on the side streets while improving safety, cohesiveness, and vibrancy along the corridor.

**2. Streetscape and Functionality**

The design of a safe street for all users must involve a minimized number of curb cuts, alleviated traffic, and appropriate infrastructure for pedestrians, public transportation users, car drivers and mall visitors.

**3. Design and Development Guidelines**

New uses and higher density along LMS must follow specific planning and design guidelines to allow controlled development that improves aesthetics, protects property value, preserves the residential character of LMS, and creates an attractive gateway into Trumbull.

*Part 2:*

BFJ Planning held conversations with Kim Morque, from Spinnaker Real Estate Partners, to acquire a comprehensive planning perspective that included market driven scenarios. Mr. Morque visited the site, performed basic market research, and interviewed with key professionals related to the site, like Ray Baldwin (Former First Selectman), Debra Cox (Former Economic Development Director) and Steve Hodgson (Broker). The findings from the Kim Morque showed re-affirmative conclusions and are summarized below.

**BFJ Planning**



## 1. POOZ

The original intention of the POOZ was to promote low-scale development (similar to Trumbull's White Plains Road).

## 2. Zoning

On LMS the POOZ is not robust enough and has not taken off due to land prices, lot assembly possibilities and location. Development is hindered by current zoning regulations, traffic problems and community opposition:

- a. Insufficient FAR
- b. Insufficient Coverage
- c. Lot assembly option operates as a disincentive
- d. Traffic Study Requirement
- e. Community considerations present

## 3. Market

Currently there are potential market opportunities for the following uses on LMS:

- a. Medical/Dental Office
- b. Medium Density Residential
  - i. Town Houses
  - ii. Apartments
- c. Mixed-use (office/residential)

The developer also provided recommendations that contemplate two alternatives:

1. **If the intention is to make the POOZ work:**
  - a. Increase FAR and coverage
  - b. Increase flexibility to "allow the market to do its job"
2. **Adopt another strategy considering other market opportunities**
  - a. Small-scale infill development (office, residential, mix, etc.)
  - b. Redevelopment strategy (Lots 3 – 15)

### *Part 3:*

Both, the input from the community at the public workshop and the feedback from the developer, informed preliminary development scenarios prepared by BFJ Planning. The intention of the conceptual plan site was to inform the P&Z and the public of the opportunities that a medium density redevelopment plan could offer to the LMS community.

The scenario contemplates residential uses with flexible lot assembly configurations. Redevelopment happens gradually and allows higher density to guarantee a profitable outcome. The urban design strategy proposes an internal circulation system and reduces the number of curb cuts into LMS. This would also allow for a continuous sidewalk on the east side of LMS where sidewalks are currently lacking. Additionally, signalized access would be located at the center of the development and streetscape improvements such as crossings, street lighting and preserved vegetation would promote cohesiveness.

The P&Z and the public were receptive and enthusiastic about the scenario presented. They showed concern about the potential vehicular traffic increase. However, it was publicly discussed that this type of development would still produce less traffic than commercial, institutional or mixed-use uses.

Additionally, BFJ shared case studies of similar developments in other parts of the country like Oregon, Connecticut, and New York.

#### **Part 4:**

After the presentation from BFJ Planning and a short discussion with the P&Z on the feasibility of a medium density residential development, Chairman Chory opened up for comments.

Comments from P&Z Commission:

- LMS has opportunities that no other area in Trumbull has, it constitutes a gateway, there is the potential for development while residential presence is also strong, community is active, and has access to the Merritt Parkway and Westfield Mall. However, not much has happened because the question between preservation and development has not yet been answered. If the answer is preservation, what does it mean? Could it actually mean decay? Or even—more of the same?
- Opportunities for development on LMS must not be lost. They are urgent and strategies to control the architecture style in case of new development will be needed.
- Design guidelines can facilitate and guide development but might not be enough. Other options discussed were Form Based Code<sup>1</sup> and reliance on the Architecture Review Board.

Comments from residents:

- Ingress/egress on Botsford Place and Bonnie View are less desirable.
- Single family home units will enhance property value.
- Current regulation does not allow for combining more than two lots. Zoning changes would have to occur in order to allow merging more than two lots and its implications.
- Density would have to increase in order to guarantee developer's profit from buying and combining more than two lots.
- Residential uses are considered as a better option than medical building because they produce less traffic and do not compete with the already existing building on Old Town Road.

Other comments from residents:

- There is a discrepancy between the perceived and actual amount of traffic on LMS. Although a traffic volume study shows that traffic on LMS is not an actual problem, residents expressed the difficulties with school bus turns, pedestrian crossings (especially for kids), and waiting areas like bus shelters and school bus stops. All of these situations threaten safety regardless of the traffic volume. The traffic problems on LMS are more related to the quality of the street than the quantity of the cars.
- Green buffers from traffic and parking lots and the use of grasscrete on parking lots were suggested as measures to improve streetscape while allowing development.

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<sup>1</sup>A form-based code is a land development regulation that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code.(Form Based Code Institute)

## Critical Discussion Points for Trumbull Planning & Zoning Commission Working Session (8/27/2014)

### Lower Main Street Design Study

- **Future vision for Lower Main Street** – Neighborhood Preservation versus Economic Growth (i.e. commercial uses) – realizing that in order to attract commercial development the parameters of the POOZ will have to be modified (higher allowable FAR and greater lot assemblage allowances, etc.). Is the original intent of the POOZ valid?
- **Range of uses** – Presently the area zoning allows for single-family uses with limited professional office. However, a market exists for medium density residential uses, and there may be market capacity to mix office and residential. To what degree would the P&Z Commission support these alternate uses?
- **Degree of regulatory flexibility** – Presently the area zoning is written restrictively (in use, size, bulk, only two-lot assemblage, the requirement for traffic study, relatively high required parking ratio at 5 spaces per 1,000 sf, etc.). Greater flexibility in these would help incentivize the market. For example, allowing both residential and/or office uses, reducing parking requirements or encouraging shared parking, higher lot assembly, etc. would help attract the development community.
- **Development Standards** – for any development in the area (whether commercial or medium density residential) what are some of the dimensional and design standards that would be important to specify (i.e. building/site design, street improvements, signage, lighting pedestrian access/safety, traffic access/control, etc.) – this relates strong to the image the area would project as a gateway to Trumbull.

## LOWER MAIN STREET DESIGN STUDY

Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting 08.27.2014



*Presentation to P&Z Committee and feedback from residents at the working session.*



## **APPENDIX C: SPINNAKER REAL ESTATE PARTNERS PROJECT MEMORANDUM**

### **Lower Main Street Design Study**

*Trumbull, CT*

## Town of Trumbull, CT: Main Street Professional Office Overlay Zone Review

Issues

September 9, 2014

- Location

The location within the region is good, with easy access to Route 15, directly north of the POOZ designated area and Route 25, a major north / south roadway a short drive east of the district.

- Neighborhood context

The zone is made up of single family homes that are owner occupied and less than 1 acre and most are less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre. It has a strong residential character although it is across the street from Westfield, a major regional mall, which is set back several hundred feet from Main Street. There are a several rentals and a few vacant structures in the zone. Generally the homes are in good repair but not manicured or highly maintained.

The zone is relatively small, consisting of only 25 parcels. The roadway and length of the district is relatively short and constrained. This creates challenges because of the small scale and inefficiencies of the land parcels. It seems that the district will take a long time to evolve because of the lot sizes and configurations and will still be less than desirable.

- Market for professional office - overlay zone is not being utilized as intended.

The location does bolster the objective of introducing small professional buildings and conversions but with small lots. Limited setbacks from the street and access / egress create challenges. Having fewer and larger parcels (still relatively small) will help reduce curb cuts and provide more opportunities for internal driveways and circulation. Side street entry / egress in some cases may help but will likely raise concern from abutting residential neighborhoods.

- Allowable professional office size

The allowable size of professional offices may be appropriate but the limitation on combining parcels kills the economics by doubling land costs, thus hindering a more rational land use pattern. This may be intended to address the numerous small lots (13 of 25 are less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  &  $\frac{1}{2}$  ac., 52%) and concerns that adjoining property owners and neighborhoods have with traffic and overburdening of roadways.

- Property values

The question is .....are small professional office properties viable in this location? If so, what will the rents / sales support in terms of land costs and total development cost? What is the impact on single family home prices?

The Zillow market value is helpful. The players for this slow redevelopment evolution are small local builders and investors with buy and hold outlook. Return expectations should be 8%-12%, free and clear (no debt).

#### Conversions

- Converting existing single family homes may be the best option because renovation costs can be done for less than a new build, depending on the condition of the structure and site issues.

#### New Construction

- Buying, demolishing and building will be most challenging, especially if combining lots. For example, 2900 sf x \$100 supports \$300,000 of new construction costs (roughly). With home (land) prices at the low 200's to high 200's the numbers don't work. This is probably the reason lot 18/19 developer sought higher density.
- Is there a market for small scale residential?  
I think there is. The model might be duplex and four-plex buildings given the size of the parcels. In short, rents will be about the same as professional office rents so the economics are equal. The residential market is more robust and will absorb units more readily than professional office. Adding small apartment units to the zone could strengthen the area and hasten the evolution to a more "commercial" corridor. There will be the usual concerns about children in schools which will need to be addressed.
- Other findings / thoughts
  - Neighbors are very vocal; land use will be difficult
  - Trumbull views itself as a small town and wants to stay that way
  - City officials want to increase tax base
  - City wanted to provide alternative to the White Plains road commercial space
  - Concerns about POOZ housing falling into "disrepair"
  - Concerns about Bridgeport holds back development in Trumbull

#### Interview List:

Paul Timpanelli – President and CEO of Bridgeport Regional Business Council

Ray Baldwin – Former First Selectmen, Trumbull

Deborah Cox – Former Executive Director of Economic Development, Trumbull

Steve Hodson – President, Hodson Realty, Trumbull, CT

#### Prepared by:

Kim Morque, Spinnaker Real Estate Partners